

Public Health Vaccine Outreach Overview

December 2020 - August 2021

Alexandria Health Department



Outreach Overview

The Public Health Outreach team at the Alexandria Health Department has been working tirelessly to assuage fears, combat misconceptions, bust myths, increase medical accessibility, and get all eligible Alexandrians vaccinated against COVID-19. Take a minute to read the story that our research tells on how these efforts are going. Dig in!

104 Total Outreach Events to-date including...

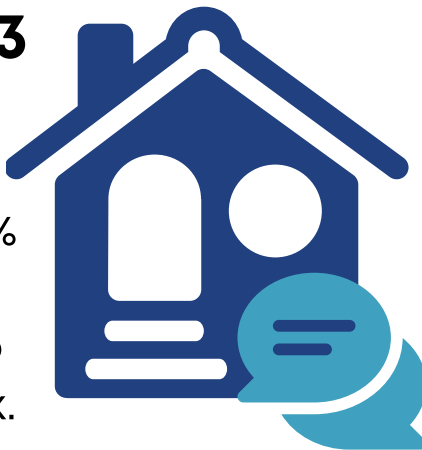
63 Tabling Events
at a total of 19
Locations



41 Canvassing Events all across Alexandria

Doors Knocked: 8,113

With roughly 80,000 total households in Alexandria, we have reached about 10% of all Alexandrians, while specifically reaching out to the residents at highest risk.



1244 hours of Outreach and Counting!

That's a lot of walking, talking, and knocking!

...all of which produced over 4,774 individual interactions with Alexandrians!

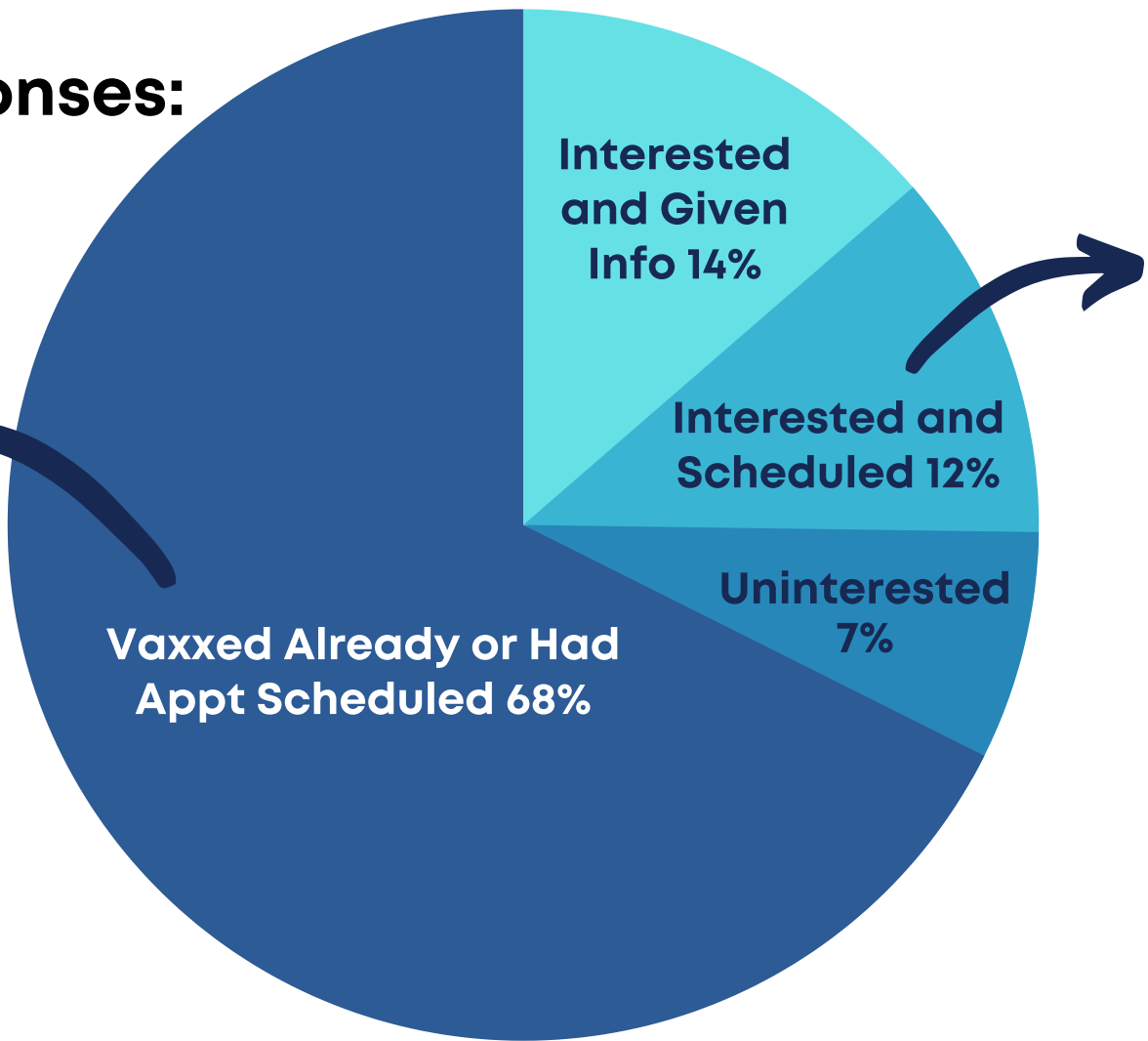


Responses:

68%

Of respondents were vaccinated or already had a vaccination appointment scheduled

This number is in fact very encouraging: Almost 70 percent of the Alexandrians we identified in our research as the most vulnerable and who we connected with at outreach events are already protected or were in the process of getting protected!



553 Appointments Booked in Real Time

Out of all interactions with unvaccinated folks, 36% resulted in making a vaccine appointment on the spot!

82,280 Doses and Counting

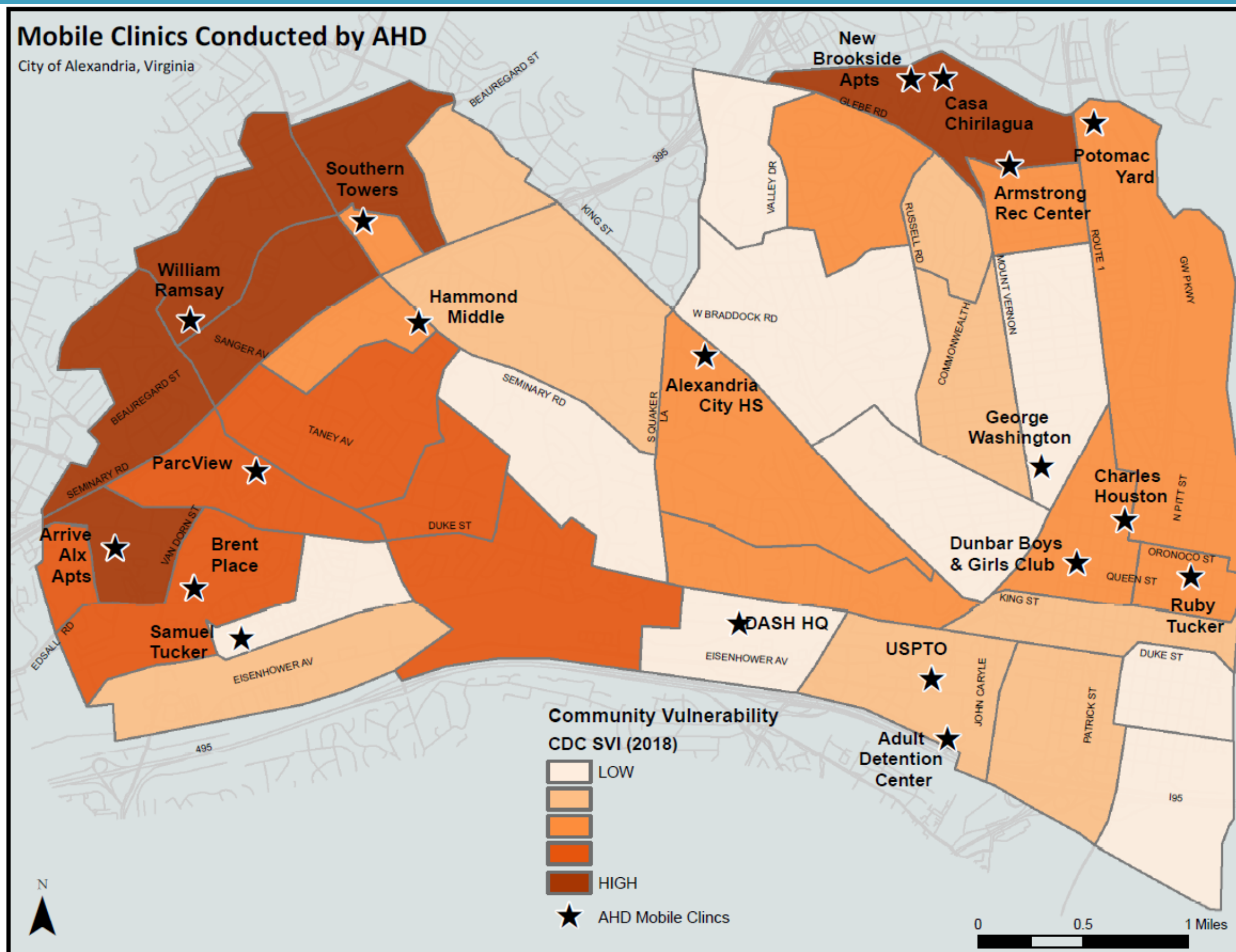
As of July 27th 2021, the Alexandria Health Department has administered 82,280 COVID-19 vaccine doses to residents and essential workers.



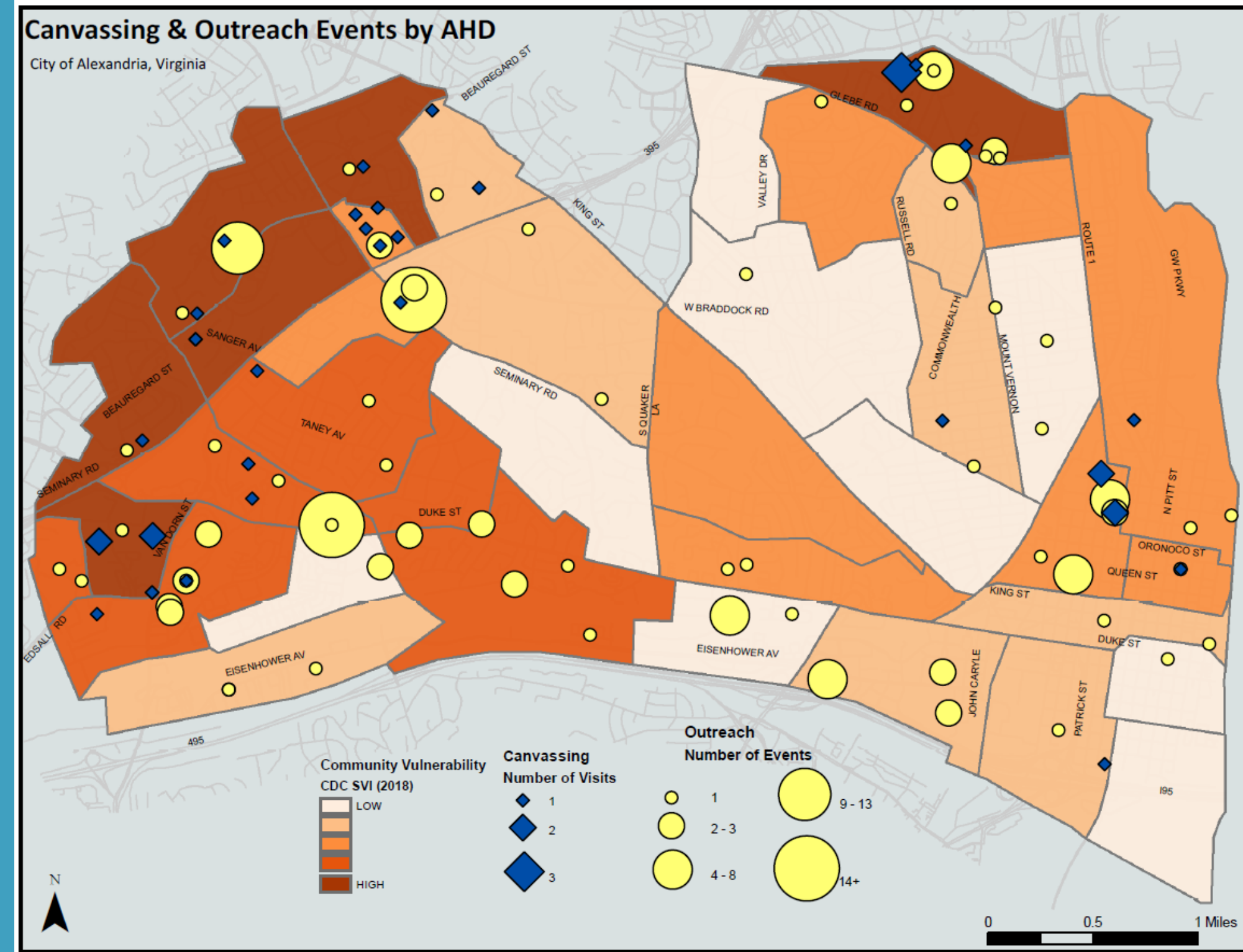
Outreach is a Team Sport

Dozens of community partners across the city have assisted our outreach efforts by teaming up with AHD. Here are a just few of the ways that our community partners have lent a hand:

- Hosted mobile vaccination clinics in residential common areas to increase accessibility and visibility for building and community residents.
- Invited AHD clinics into their offices and businesses to provide hyperlocal vaccines to nearby Alexandrians.
- Identified communities with vaccine concerns and coordinated virtual information sessions to address them.



- Promoted vaccine events to the people they serve in various channels like social media, email, and whatsapp.
- Registered residents and essential workers for vaccine appointments using AHD systems.
- Provided paid time off to employees and encouraged attendance at AHD clinics.
- Supported outreach workers as they canvassed and tabled onsite at apartments and businesses, expanding AHD's reach to meet more Alexandrians where they are.



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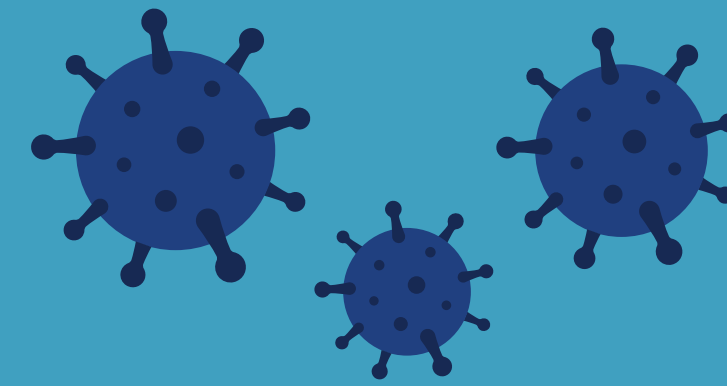
Quote from an Outreach Worker: I met an older gentleman walking out from a 7/11. He originally ignored me, but quickly turned my way when I mentioned vaccines. He told me that he received one dose of Pfizer several months ago, but that he was unable to receive his second dose due to transportation and technology difficulties. We had just opened a new clinic nearby and I was canvassing to catch people walking in the area. I talked to him about the clinic and walked him over to receive his second dose. He was very grateful and I often see him sitting at his usual bench with his buddies that he had not seen for some time.

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COVID-19 Outreach and Accessibility Tactics

This overview is intended to highlight our COVID-19 vaccine outreach strategies implemented by the Alexandria Health Department. This document provides examples of how our outreach efforts were utilized to engage residents on vaccine safety, information, and accessibility.



9 Months Into COVID-19 Vaccines: A Snapshot of Equity Best Practices

The Alexandria Health Department (AHD) began vaccinating against COVID-19 on December 24, 2020. Since then, AHD has administered over 80,000 doses to residents and essential workers. Throughout each step of the process, AHD has centered equity and science to prioritize Alexandria's most vulnerable populations.

Key Actions

(adapted from World Health Organization guidance):

- Engage community partners in designing and implementing communication plans, strategies, and materials.
- Engage with community partners to identify and address barriers to access
- Co-hosted events with local organizations to build and reinforce trust with residents.
- Use existing digital platforms to disseminate information widely
- Leverage trusted community resources such as faith leaders, recreation centers and local non-profits to disseminate accurate information.

All of these encourage buy-in and strengthen preexisting community connections, while providing support for those who need it most.



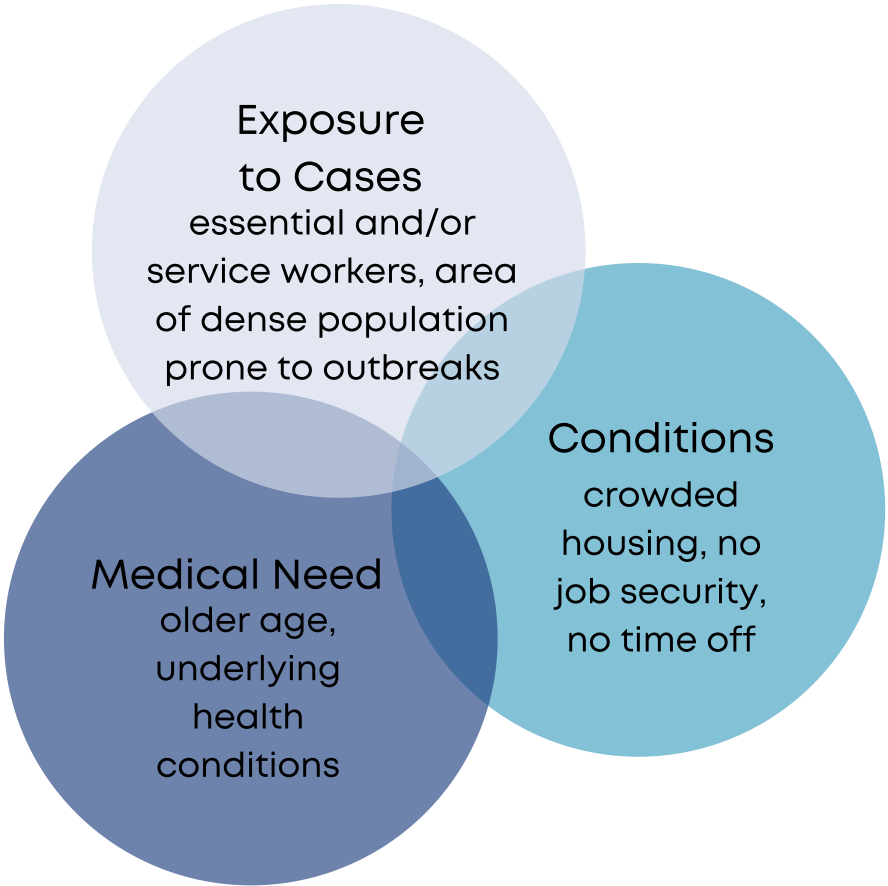
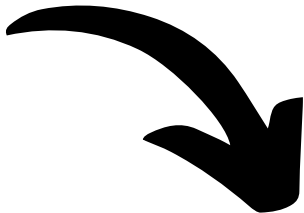
COVID-19 Outreach and Accessibility Tactics Continued



Data Driven Adaptability

In 2019, AHD conducted a Community Health Assessment -or CHA for short- and uncovered significant disparities in Alexandria based on race, ethnicity, education level, age, and gender identity; all as a result of historic and current discriminatory policies that created inequitable conditions.

Recognizing that these historically marginalized populations were more likely to be disproportionately harmed by or vulnerable to COVID-19, AHD utilized the CHA data points in conjunction with the CDC’s social vulnerability index to identify key populations within specific ZIP codes throughout the city. AHD defined the most vulnerable residents related to COVID-19 as older adults, people with underlying health conditions, people who live in crowded conditions, and people without sick leave or health insurance.



In Alexandria, this burden predominantly falls on residents in long-term care facilities, congregate living facilities, and our communities of color.



Improving Accessibility and Transparency with COVID-19 Vaccines

To achieve equity, we must remove barriers and create conditions in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. We can build that equitable environment by meeting community members where they are--in the community.

Community mobilization and engagement are fundamental components in AHD's COVID-19 vaccination efforts. AHD emphasizes a bottom up approach to create outreach strategies that resonate with residents by incorporating feedback from community members at every stage. This engagement and continuous feedback loop helps build and reinforce community trust; while adapting to behavior change through culturally appropriate communication channels. AHD has prioritized providing accurate information from trusted sources while leveraging existing relationships in the community to establish direct pathways for communication. These trusted sources are community partners and providers in priority areas of Alexandria.



How did this happen?

Accessibility is not simply centered on equitable vaccine distribution. It is also the equitable distribution of information on a consistent basis. By incorporating Get Out the Vote (GOTV) strategies into outreach efforts, AHD has created a form of COVID-19 vaccine advocacy that encourages residents to make informed decisions about their health. Through the combined use of personalized messaging and framing during outreach, AHD is able to hold authentic person to person conversations and identify existing barriers that reinforce vaccine confidence among all residents.



AHD used these dynamic interactions to revise outreach materials and ensure that they provide culturally relevant information. Vaccine deliberation can come in many forms and as a result, the outreach team has worked diligently to meet community members where they are, even if it requires multiple conversations and repeated, consistent presence in the community.



Quote from an Outreach Worker: "While conducting field outreach, we encountered a resident at Global Foods. I approached him with our vaccine clinic calendar flyer and he immediately said "I am young and I want to have a really big family, I'm not ready for the vaccine to take that away from me". I asked him what he meant by that and he said he has been *hearing rumors that the vaccine causes infertility. I immediately provided him with the flyers we have that specifically highlight the myths about vaccines and infertility.* As the conversation continued, **he reconsidered and we scheduled him for an appointment.**"



Beyond information sharing, AHD utilized resident input and data to establish vaccination clinics in the heart of the community, including residential apartment buildings, recreation centers as well as in churches. AHD has also partnered with local organizations to administer vaccines during events such as food distributions, community cookouts and rental assistance outreach. This approach, in conjunction with large scale vaccine clinics, has resulted in AHD administering more than 80,000 doses of vaccine in Alexandria.







Phased Vaccination Strategies

The following summary highlights some of the strategies during each phase of COVID-19 vaccine rollout, but this is not an exhaustive list of every tactic used.

Phase 1: Limited supply of vaccine doses available

- Utilized a pre-registration list containing age, race, and ethnicity data collection points to ensure fair and equitable vaccine access and distribution to residents and essential workers.
- Offered vaccine clinics several days a week, including weekends.
- Proactively contacted healthcare employers to expedite healthcare worker vaccinations as soon as vaccines become available.
- Collaborated with local pharmacies to streamline vaccination access for senior residents by establishing vaccine sites at senior living facilities.
- Allowed direct sign-ups for senior organizations and target nonprofits at partner providers (e.g. grocery stores, pharmacies, clinics).
- Modified appointment density to accommodate mobility issues.
- Advocated for essential restaurant workers to have earlier access and move from phase 1C to Phase 1B.
- Collaborated with pharmacists to provide vaccine clinics at different hours and locations, including at worksites and near public transit hubs.
- Assisted with scheduling appointments online or by phone for those with low digital literacy.
- Targeted vaccine clinics in convenient locations for certain sectors (grocery store, restaurant, and childcare workers).
- Prioritized within phases based on resident census tract using CDC social vulnerability index.

Factors Used to Calculate Social Vulnerability

	Socioeconomic Status	Below Poverty
		Unemployed
		Income
		No High School Diploma
	Household Composition & Disability	Aged 65 or Older
		Aged 17 or Younger
		Civilian with a Disability
		Single-Parent Households
	Minority Status & Language	Minority
		Aged 5 or Older who Speaks English "Less than Well"
	Housing Type & Transportation	Multi-Unit Structures
		Mobile Homes
		Crowding
		No Vehicle
		Group Quarters

From the CDC: www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html



Phased Vaccination Strategies

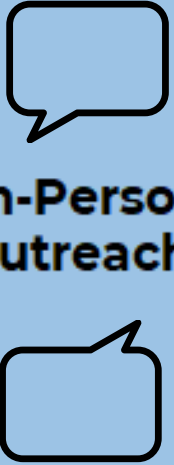
The following summary highlights some of the strategies during each phase of COVID-19 vaccine rollout, but this is not an exhaustive list of every tactic used.

Phase 2: Adequate supply of vaccine doses available

- Utilized social vulnerability index and local data to identify key areas to conduct outreach & education.
- Targeted mobile clinics based on census tracts and demographics in locations such as apartments, rec centers, and businesses.
- Collaborated with local partners to coordinate vaccinations during community events (cookouts, eviction support, food distribution).
- Established clinics at different locations and hours to improve accessibility.
- Established walk-in and appointment scheduling options to accommodate residents. Options include scheduling available online, telephone and in person with outreach.
- Provided language interpreters on site at vaccination clinics.
- Outreach teams provided transportation guidance for residents to get to clinics.
- Worked with a regional collaborative of health departments to invest \$250,000 in paid media campaigns, promoting vaccines, especially to communities of color.




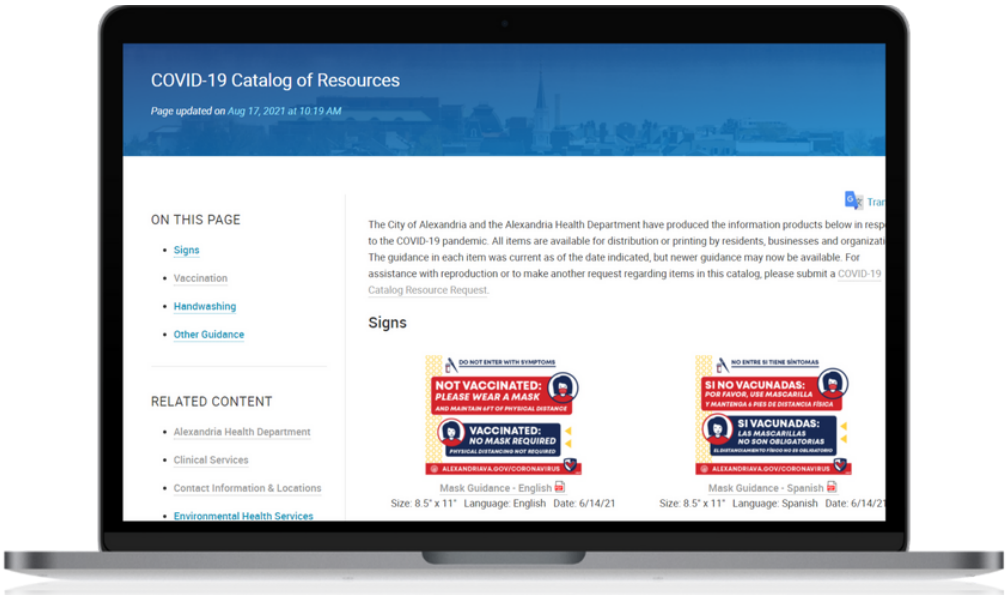
A Holistic Approach: In-Person Communication

	Canvassing	General Field Outreach		
	Residences	Local Businesses	Community Partners/ Events	General Awareness
 In-Person outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Door to Door Canvassing/visits to units and businesses within target ZIP codes Host on-site vaccine clinics in apartment buildings to increase access for residents within property and surrounding area Prioritize areas and buildings with committed affordable housing units Provided residents that have transportation barriers with public transit options to nearby locations and other alternatives Provided flyers to residents with lists of nearby vaccine locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated outreach (tabling) outside of local businesses to engage residents within the area for nearby events Conducted tabling at local businesses such as grocery stores, breweries, laundromats and provided patrons with information on nearby vaccine locations Met with eligible Phase 1 businesses to raise awareness of eligibility and to add people to pre-registration list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Door to Door canvassing/visits to apartment units and businesses within close proximity of community events promoting vaccines and other resources Collaborated with local nonprofits to provide vaccines and resources to residents that attend each event Collaborated with local organizations to provide food distribution/free food and vaccines to residents during each event Collaborated with local organizations to attend community events and distribute information to attendees on covid-19 vaccine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified bilingual outreach staff and volunteers to engage residents on vaccine safety, awareness, access in efforts to reduce language barriers Conducted outreach in collaboration with trusted community members to target priority populations

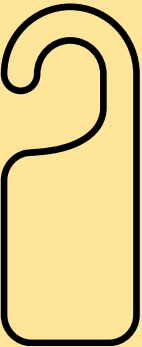

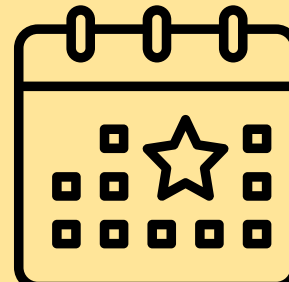


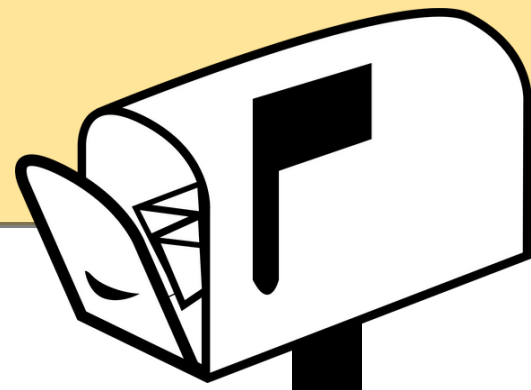
A Holistic Approach: Digital Communication

	Canvassing	General Field Outreach		
	Residences	Local Businesses	Community Partners/ Events	General Awareness
<div>  <p>Digital Outreach</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emailed condo and apartment property managers regularly with suggested signage and guidance City website is published for appointment booking and vaccine information COVID-19 Hotline with current information about vaccine and language interpretation for vaccination awareness and education Vaccine Events/Information provided to apartment residents via email listserv 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City website is published for appointment booking and vaccine information COVID-19 Hotline with current information about vaccine and language interpretation for vaccination awareness and education Email to distribution list of participating local businesses of ALX Promise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City website is published for appointment booking and vaccine information COVID-19 Hotline with current information about vaccine and language interpretation for vaccination awareness and education Social media outreach through community partners Email distribution to Alexandria City Public Schools and private schools to include information via newsletters Consistent events and information sharing with nonprofits and houses of worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City website is published for appointment booking and vaccine information COVID-19 Hotline with current information about vaccine and language interpretation for vaccination awareness and education Generated twice-weekly eNews with COVID-19 information, and press releases for large vaccine-related changes or announcements Participated in dozens of virtual community town halls to spread awareness Collaborated with organizations that provide services/resources to vulnerable populations to reduce access barriers Presentations done at businesses associations and for specific industries or companies upon request



A Holistic Approach: Print Communication

	Canvassing	General Field Outreach		
	Residences	Local Businesses	Community Partners/ Events	General Awareness
Printed Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Door hangers left when residents were unavailable during canvassing. Door hangers and flyers include COVID Hotline number and City website for vaccine event information Posted flyers via community board for each apartment building Coordinated with partners to include flyers in weekly food distribution bags for low-income or homebound residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flyer distribution to all local businesses within 500ft radius of event Posted vaccine calendar in front door of businesses nearby vaccine sites Multilingual mailer to all eligible businesses during Phase 1 vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flyer distribution to busy pedestrian areas within 1/2 mile radius of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multilingual direct mailing to homes with flyers that contain general vaccine info, includes COVID-19 hotline number and vaccine event information, vaccine education/awareness Distributed yard signs in priority areas. Yard signs contain website information and COVID-19 hotline phone number. Distributed vaccine flyers at AHD affiliated COVID-19 testing sites Posted pole signs throughout priority areas with the vaccine website and hotline number



Outreach Toolkit

Outreach often requires a variety of materials and methods to see if efforts are successful.

Communication Materials:

- **Canvassing Scripts** - Provides phrasing for staff engaging residents on COVID-19 vaccine information, safety and accessibility
- **Appointment Booking Cards** - Provides reminders for residents and is used to create vaccination plans
- **Yard Signs** - Provides residents with reminders to access to AHD's vaccine website and hotline
- **Community Event Flyers** - Provides residents with information on AHD collaborations with local organizations
- **Transportation Flyers** - Provides residents experiencing transportation barriers with alternatives for making their vaccine appointments
- **Weekly Clinic Calendar** - Developed to provide a weekly schedule of upcoming vaccine events

Informational Materials:

- **Vaccine Updates** - Updated regularly and used to provide residents with information on vaccine safety
- **Mythbusters** - Updated regularly and used to provide residents with accurate information from trusted sources
- **FAQ** - Updated regularly to provide staff with knowledge to engage residents on vaccine information and safety

Analytics and Planning

- **GIS Mapping** - Utilized to develop maps that outline priority areas throughout the city based on social vulnerability index (low income levels, race, etc) and high prevalence of COVID cases.
- **Canvassing Tracker** - Utilized to track engagement with residents for data reporting purposes all in accordance with HIPAA privacy rules
- **Post-outreach report** - Utilized to obtain feedback from outreach staff



Looking Ahead

Takeaways, next phases, and the way forward for a healthier Alexandria!

AHD will continue utilizing the lessons learned from our outreach experiences to modify our tactics as we prepare for the next phase of vaccinations. We are committed to creating more opportunities for community members through educational sessions and continued conversations on COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness. We are working to provide third doses to our moderately or severely immunocompromised community members while taking necessary measures to prepare for administering booster shots to community members when deemed eligible. These targeted approaches will be part of a concerted effort to create a safer community for all residents and essential workers in Alexandria.

This fall, AHD will be empowering community groups by partnering with ACT for Alexandria to award grants up to \$30,000 to local nonprofits for COVID-19 vaccine education and outreach support across the city. These grants will support initiatives that increase COVID-19 vaccination, prioritize populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and deepen trusted relationships with community partners. Activities may differ based on the grantee, but could include one-on-one conversations with community members to dispel misinformation, provide avenues for individuals to overcome access barriers, and build trust within local public health and healthcare systems.

